GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4884
ANSWERED ON:24.08.2001
VISIT OF US TRADE REPRESENTATIVE
A. VENKATESH NAIK;RAMSHETH THAKUR

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick had recently visited India;

(b) if so, the details of discussion held with him;

(c) the outcome of the discussion;

(d) whether the Government have discussed the issue regarding restrictions on steel and textile imports imposed by the USA; and

(e) if so, the outcome thereof?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH)

(a), (b)&(c) : The US Trade Representative (USTR) Mr. Robert Zoellick has visited India during the period from 8th to 10th August 2001. The Commerce & Industry Minister(C&IM) had discussions with the visiting USTR on various WTO issues in the wake o forthcoming Ministerial Conference of WTO to be held from 9-13 November, 2001 at Doha, Qatar. During discussions, CIM explained to USTR the Indian opposition to the inclusion of any new issues into the agenda of WTO unless there is a convergence in the views of the WTO membership. The CIM also exhorted the USTR to take lead in the resolution of the implementation related concerns of the developing countries and not press for the launch of a new round of negotiations. USTR, however, during discussions said that a new round of negotiations would be good for developing countries including India and that India should engage in the process of the launching of the new round so as to be able to influence the process. The USTR, offered the US cooperation on agriculture, services, e-commerce and environment on which according to him, there was a broad commonality of approach between India and US.USTR also said that in view of growing understanding and the strategic partnership, India and US should continue their dialogue on WTO issues.

(d)&(e) : During the various formal and informal discussions, covering bilateral trade relations India had emphasized the need for giving increased market access to Indian exports of various items including steel and textile items. The USTR noted India`s concerns in this regard for appropriate action.